Reviewer's report

Title: A retrospective study of PBDEs and PCBs in human milk from the Faroe Islands

Version: 1 Date: 2 May 2005

Reviewer: Thomas Webster

Reviewer's report:

General: Fine paper; the results for PBDE 153 are extremely interesting.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached):

None

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. pgs. 10 (PBDEs), 11&13 (PCBs), 12 (deca): Because the earlier time points were pooled data, they have no measure of variation; this makes assessment of trends more difficult. Please provide more explanation of this limitation.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. pg. 6: Explain that participants are all long-term residents of the Faroe Islands, if that is correct.
2. pgs. 10, 15: Where was the cow milk obtained, in the Faroe Islands? Dairy products in the USA contain PBDEs, although the sampling has been very limited (Schecter et al 2004, ES&T 38:5306-11).
3. pg. 11: The conclusion about diet could use more explanation, e.g., was there no association at all or one that was not statistically significant? You may have low power to detect such an association.
4. Table 1: Although the summaries are suitable for the paper, it would be useful to present the congener-specific data for each data point. The reader could then examine associations between congeners.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.